

scholarship program for eligible graduates of Davis High School, at the time Houston's lowest-performing high school. By 1992, the number of Davis graduates entering college had more than quadrupled. Still, Mr. Ketelsen was not satisfied because high school graduation rates and college matriculation rates continued to fall short of his expectations. He knew, given the right investments and the right commitment, that Davis students—and all students from economically disadvantaged communities—were capable of much more. As Mr. Ketelsen is inclined to insist, "It's not the kids!" Armed with that belief, Mr. Ketelsen has dedicated the last two decades to making an enormous difference for America's highest needs students.

I have been a longtime supporter of Project GRAD in Congress and was pleased to be able to get a provision into the recently-enacted Higher Education Opportunity Act to expand Project GRAD so that more low-income and minority students can attend college and earn degrees. Today, Project GRAD has expanded to 13 communities and reaches more than 120,000 students and families from California to New York, Alaska to Georgia. In the longest-served group of schools, GRAD scholars are completing college at a rate 92 percent above the national average for students from similar demographic backgrounds. A statistically significant sample of GRAD scholarship recipients who have completed college shows that the proportion who graduated with majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—concentrations of dire need for the national economy and national security—exceeded the national average for minority students by 71 percent. In the coming academic year, more than 7,500 students will be in college, funded by a Project GRAD scholarship. GRAD has already sent high school graduates to more than 100 institutions of higher education, including many of the most highly selective colleges and universities in the Nation. At the beginning of high school, many Project GRAD students would never have dreamed of attending Harvard, Yale, MIT, Cornell, Emory, Georgetown, Rice, Texas, Virginia, or Amherst, yet because of Mr. Ketelsen's vision, determination, and remarkable leadership, Project GRAD has altogether altered those expectations.

I am honored to know James Ketelsen personally and I am grateful for the tenacity and passion with which he has served America's children and families. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing the gratitude of the U.S. Congress for the extensive contributions to education and our society that he made during his lifetime.

#### VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 10, 2008*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House is considering today S. 2617, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2008. If enacted, this bill would require the Secretary of Veterans Af-

fairs to provide a COLA to veterans receiving disability compensation and other select VA beneficiaries that matches the cost-of-living increase rates of Social Security beneficiaries. The increase would take effect December 1, 2008.

I am pleased that this Congress has kept its promises to America's veterans. Last year, we passed the largest single funding increase in the history of the VA, and I am hopeful that we will continue to increase funding for key VA programs over the coming year. In the meantime, it is necessary for us to meet some other basic challenges facing our veterans, and the bill before us addresses one of those challenges.

Many veterans live on fixed incomes, and thus have been very hard hit by recent increases in prices for food, gasoline, and other essentials. By passing this COLA, we will give veterans across America the additional financial assistance they need to care for themselves and their families. The Senate passed this bill in July 2008. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I urge the President to sign it as soon as it reaches his desk.

#### HONORING MARK TEETERS OF NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 11, 2008*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mark Teeters, who is being honored as the Napa County 2009 Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Teeters is entering his ninth year as Director of Choral Activities at Vintage High School in Napa. He also serves as chair of the Vintage High Visual and Performing Arts Department.

Under his leadership, the Vintage High School choir has ascended to elite status, winning gold medals at competitions around the world. They are a fixture at community events and contribute greatly to the cultural and artistic vitality of the Napa Valley. During the past 4 years, they have performed two extremely well-received musicals: *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*.

As a lifelong Napan, Mr. Teeters not only uses his considerable talents to serve his students, but the community at large as well. He serves as Music Director at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Napa and co-conducts the Napa Valley Chorale, a local community choir.

A great teacher can have an impact on a young person that lasts forever. All of us can remember a teacher that has had a profound influence on our lives. Mr. Teeters has had this impact on hundreds of his students and is a sterling example of the best his profession has to offer. Under the constant specter of budget cuts to art and music programs, Mr. Teeters works tirelessly to ensure music education continues to play an important role in the life of his students.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Mark Teeters for the leadership, guidance and inspiration he has provided to hundreds of young people throughout his career. I join the entire community in thanking him for his service and wishing him continued success.

#### RECOGNIZING THE WORKFORCE MOSAIC AND THEIR ROLE IN THE ANCOR 2008 GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES SEMINAR

**HON. LEE TERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 11, 2008*

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize all the good people at Mosaic, who have come to Washington, D.C. to take part in the American Network of Community Options and Resources, ANCOR, 2008 Governmental Activities Seminar.

Mosaic, a disability advocacy organization based in my Congressional district, has a long history of providing direct support and services to individuals with disabilities of all ages. It employs more than 5,000 employees nationally who provide a range of supports 7 days a week, 24-hours a day. In Omaha, Mosaic's highly skilled and committed workforce support more than 250 individuals, making Mosaic one of the largest providers in the metropolitan area.

Throughout this week, people from Mosaic, along with the attendees at ANCOR's events are meeting with their Congressional offices to raise awareness about the need for an adequately paid, trained and dedicated workforce. Most direct support professionals are women with families working 40-hour work weeks at an average of \$9.47 an hour. That amounts to an annual salary of \$18,182, a figure below the \$21,200 poverty level for a family of four. Low wages have been a prime obstacle in maintaining a qualified workforce. Unlike other sectors of the private market, the formal long-term supports system is almost entirely dependent upon public financing—particularly Medicaid funding.

Demand for direct support professionals continues to grow and is estimated to increase by about 38 percent over the next 12 years. We must ensure that qualified and reliable people are recruited as caregivers so that they in turn can help individuals with disabilities participate and contribute to their communities.

Madam Speaker, there is no better way to recognize this workforce's contribution to the Nation than to ensure that these dedicated direct support professionals are fairly compensated. I urge my colleagues to join with me in cosponsoring the bipartisan Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act, H.R. 1279.

#### REMEMBER THOSE KILLED ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

**HON. JOHN L. MICA**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 11, 2008*

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, As our Nation reflects upon the day of the terrorist attacks 7 years ago this week, I cannot forget my friends who were killed by terrorists that day.

Some 7 weeks before September 11, 2001, I spent several days in New York City with Neal Levin, executive director of the Port Authority New York and New Jersey. I met Neal when he was the legislative director to Senator Al D'Amato of New York and when I was